



NO HUMAN IS LIMITED

I recently watched *Kipchoge: The Last Milestone*, a Universal Pictures film documentary produced in 2021 by Ridley Scott. It follows professional long-distance runner Eliud Kipchoge as he strives to achieve something once thought impossible: to finish a marathon, or 42.195 km, in less than 2 hours. I participated seriously in several youth sports, I have completed almost 20 marathons (at a pedestrian pace, I must add), and I follow a wide range of sports. Athletic achievements inspire me, and I was vaguely aware that the marathon's mystical and impossible 2-hour mark was being threatened. It was considered by almost everyone who understands marathon running to be utterly impossible.

Eliud Kipchoge, regarded as the greatest marathoner of all time, believed differently. This incredibly humble human being from the Rift Valley Province in Kenya is now a legend. He holds the world record marathon time (2:01:39), he won two Gold medals for the marathon at the 2016 and 2020 Olympic Games (2:08:44 and 2:08:38, respectively), and he won silver and bronze medals for the 5,000 m at the 2008 and 2004 Olympic Games (13:02.08 and 13:15.10, respectively).¹

Kipchoge set the target of breaking the 2-hour barrier for the marathon and assembled a team to help him accomplish his goal. This required running a pace of approximately 2:50 per km, or equivalent to 1:08 per lap around an athletics track for a total of 105 laps.

You don't need to be a sports fan to get something out of the film. It demonstrates the indomitability of the human spirit when focused on a goal. The teamwork behind Kipchoge's mission is something to behold. During his attempt at breaking the 2-hour mark on October 12, 2019, some of the world's best marathoners, who would typically be competing against Kipchoge, set the pace for him by running in formation in 4-km segments.

Their efforts produced an incredible moment for humankind: Kipchoge finished the marathon in 1:59:33, breaking the magical 2-hour barrier.

Some of Kipchoge's comments in the film can be applied to life. "In the journey of life, there are ups and downs. In the marathon, there are a lot of challenges. There is pain in training, pain in running. And joy at the end of the marathon. So, I can say marathon is life. The way you think about pain is the way your life will be. In this world, you need to undergo pain to be successful. At the apex of the pain, that is where success is."²

The next time life throws a significant challenge my way, I am going to try to think like Eliud Kipchoge. He is an incredible athlete—a running machine with a strong mind and no limits. His traits are valuable assets for all of us in eye care as we continue helping people lead better lives by improving their vision.

Performance is key. This issue of *CRST Europe* is about visual performance—achieving new highs for our patients with the latest IOL designs and novel techniques and tools to enhance our performance. It takes a team effort, much like it did to set the world record marathon time. The pursuit of gain is a noble cause, and it is quite different from the avoidance of loss. Now, more than ever, we ophthalmologists need to focus on the pursuit of gain as our patients demand better outcomes. ■

1. World Athletics. Eliud Kipchoge. Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://worldathletics.org/athletes/kenya/eliud-kipchoge-14208194>

2. Scott J. *Kipchoge: The Last Milestone*. [Streaming]. Universal City, California: Universal Pictures. 2021.

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